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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 000745

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR CA, WHA/BSC, DHS LIAISON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CVIS](#) [BR](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: BRAZILIAN SENATORS SUPPORT REINSTITUTING VISA

REQUIREMENT FOR BRAZILIAN TRAVELERS TO MEXICO

Classified By: POLOFF RICHARD REITER, REASONS 1.4B AND D.

[¶](#)11. (C) On March 16, Ambassador Danilovich met in the embassy with Brazilian Senators Cristovam Buarque and Marcelo Crivella to discuss the issue of Brazilians attempting to enter the US illegally via the southern land border. Senator Buarque (PT-Brasilia) is a former Minister of Education who now chairs the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. He lived for four years in Washington in the 1970s while working at the IDB; his two daughters are US citizens. Senator Crivella (PL-Rio de Janeiro) chairs the Senate Sub-Committee on Protection of Brazilians Abroad. He is an evangelical minister who travels frequently to the US in connection with his church duties. For several years Crivella has worked closely with the embassy to discourage Brazilians from trying to immigrate illegally to the US and in facilitating the repatriation of Brazilians detained in US immigration facilities.

#### MINUTEMAN PROJECT

[¶](#)12. (C) Crivella expressed concern about "The Minuteman Project" ([www.minutemanproject.com](http://www.minutemanproject.com)), a group in the US enlisting members to confront illegal immigrants. While the group's website describes an effort to patrol the US southern border and report illegal immigrants to DHS, Crivella expressed concern that members of the group appear to have military training and equipment. This, the Senator noted, creates the potential for violence against immigrants in an already dangerous region. Ambassador Danilovich responded that while the group's freedom of expression is protected by law, the use of violence or vigilantism is not acceptable, and US authorities will fully prosecute such activities.

#### MEXICAN VISA WAIVER FOR BRAZILIANS

[¶](#)13. (C) The Ambassador pointed out that one part of the problem is that for the past four years, Mexico has not required visitors' visas for Brazilians, making Mexico an attractive staging point for Brazilians wishing to enter the US illegally. The Ambassador noted that this is an issue of importance to the USG, and we have raised it with the Mexicans on several occasions. The Ambassador added that the number of Brazilians detained by DHS so far this year (9,000) is running nearly double the number detained in 2004.

[¶](#)14. (C) Crivella agreed, saying he would like to see Mexico reinstate its visa requirement for Brazilians. Crivella said he will meet with Mexican President Fox next week (and will carry a letter from President Lula) and plans to raise this topic. He added that he recently wrote to Brazilian Foreign Minister Amorim, but was rebuffed. Amorim, said Crivella, responded that the visa agreement with Mexico had recently been extended for six more months so the timing was bad, and that the visa waiver was useful for "Brazilian tourists visiting Cancun". Both Senators seemed puzzled by Amorim's response, in that it seems to put the interests of a few hundred well-heeled Brazilian vacationers over that of the thousands of Brazilians detained by DHS each year. Both Senators appeared interested in revisiting the issue with the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, possibly raising it publicly in the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. Crivella suggested that his hand would be strengthened in his discussions with the Foreign Ministry if the US offers the GoB an incentive (e.g., increasing the number of work visas available to Brazilians) in return for Brazil giving up its visa waiver agreement with Mexico.

#### COMMENT - WELCOME ALLIES

[¶](#)15. (C) Brazil's Foreign Ministry often leaps at opportunities to demonstrate that its foreign policy is independent of the US, and Amorim's reluctance to revisit the Mexican visa waiver may be part of his occasional penchant to take positions that are deliberately unhelpful to US concerns. Thus our efforts in this area may be impeded as much by this sentiment as by any realistic cost-benefit analysis of the visa waiver itself. However, in the recent past, Amorim has been directly involved in bilateral consular issues (i.e., during the tensions linked to US fingerprinting requirements at POEs followed by the GOBs retaliation in kind against US visitors), and we can use that history to

re-engage with him. The Senators' still-evolving idea to raise the issue publicly in their committee is one tactic to bring pressure to bear on the Foreign Ministry. And while this approach is not guaranteed of success, the Senators make welcome allies in our cause, and post will explore with the Senators and with Washington agencies ways to approach the GoB on the issue.

DANILOVICH